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March 25, 1958

Dear Mr. President:

Here is the first question and answer  
at my press conference just concluded.

There was of course much further elabora-  
tion which will be reflected by the full  
transcript which I will get in your hands  
in due course.

Faithfully yours,



John Foster Dulles

Enclosure

The President,

The White House.

S:JFD:pdb

March 25, 1958

Q. Mr. Secretary, when you read the exchange of notes on the subject of a Summit Conference over the last week or so, it's difficult to find anything particularly new in this whole situation. How do you estimate where we now stand on the problem of a Summit Conference?

A. It has not yet been possible for me to study thoroughly and in detail the Soviet note, which I only received last night. But it does seem as though the Soviets were seeking to exact a terribly high political price as a condition to having a Summit Meeting. Now, as you know, President Eisenhower has made perfectly clear that he wants to have a Summit Meeting if there is any reasonable chance of reaching substantial agreements which will ease the international situation and make peace more likely. But it's more and more apparent, and has been revealed I think by this exchange of correspondence, that the Soviets are demanding a very high political price as a condition to having such a meeting, and the question is whether there is enough hope out of such a meeting to justify paying the political price which the Soviets seem to be exacting.

I have jotted down here, quite hurriedly, some of the price tags that they seem to be putting on it, and I would like to read those to you, if I may, to illustrate my point: (Reading)

- 1) The equating of certain Eastern European Governments,

such as Czechoslovakia and Rumania, with such Western Governments as the United Kingdom, France, and Italy.

2) Acceptance of the legitimacy of the East German Puppet Regime and acquiescence in the continued division of Germany.

3) Ending the agreed joint responsibility of the four former occupying powers of Germany for the reunification of Germany -- a responsibility that was reaffirmed at Geneva in 1955.

4) Acceptance of the Soviet claim for numerical parity in bodies, dealing with such matters as disarmament, within the competence of the United Nations General Assembly -- a parity, which, if conceded, would give the Soviets a veto power in many functions of the General Assembly, enabling them to evade the will of the great majority, and thus further to weaken the United Nations by in important respects importing into the General Assembly the same weaknesses that have crippled the Security Council.

5) The acceptance of an agenda so formulated that virtually every item -- nine out of eleven -- implies acceptance of a basic Soviet thesis that the Western Powers reject.

Now in making clear this price tag, I do not want to imply that I do not think that there will be a Summit Conference.